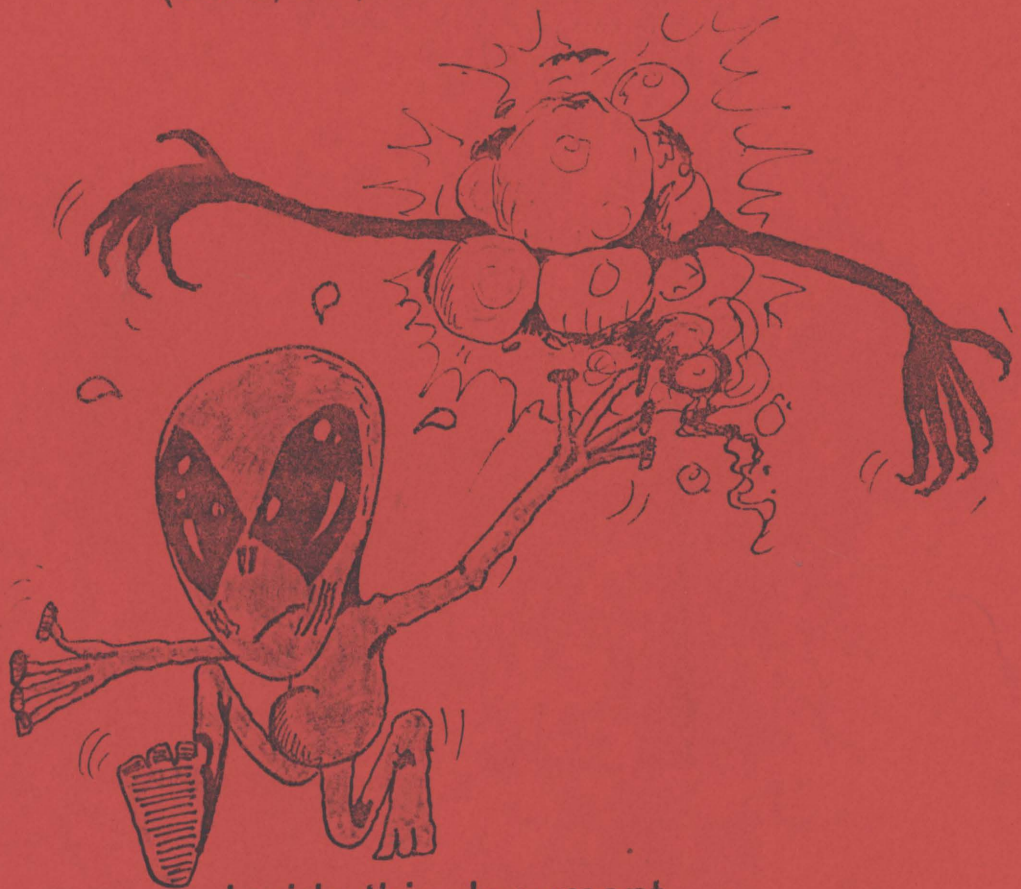


YUFOS
YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

PROJECT RED BOOK

(Vol 6, # 3, OCTOBER 2002)



inside this document

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JACQUES VALLEE ON CROP CIRCLES
OBE'S
AND TOM BOLLOXINSKI

And much more...

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"Shabba!"

A VIEW FROM BRITAIN

THE JENNY RANGLES COLUMN

(Originally published in *The MUFON JOURNAL*, August 2001)

(Editor's note - Please bear in mind the original date of publication. YUFOS extends its thanks to Jenny & to Dwight Connely, editor of *The MUFON Journal*, for permission to reproduce this work.)

Air of Mystery

One of the topics being hotly debated in the UK right now concerns mid air encounters between UFOs and commercial aircraft. There has been increasing alarm at the rising numbers of such events during the past decade - with dozens on public record in the UK - and the fear is growing that they may lead to a disaster.

This is a topic that I have been concerned with for quite some time -and I have personal cause to know just how dangerous that scenario can be.

Partly as a consequence I have compiled a study of mid air encounters in book form - that was published in the UK as *Something in the Air* (Hale) and in the US under the rather less subtle title *UFO Danger in the Air!* (Sterling, 1998).

The figures

Almost 100 mid air encounters have been reported since 1990 over Britain alone. These figures are likely to be an under estimate - given evidence from a study by a Scottish UFOlogist Jim Sneddon who routinely recorded mid air to ground radio communications and found a steady stream of never reported UFO encounters. So the official figures are the tip of the iceberg.

This concern is seen in true context when one considers that the skies over the UK are not as densely trafficked as the US (there is only a modest level of internal flights given the relatively short distances involved and the extensive rail network that carries most long range passengers across the nation).

A particularly serious incident occurred in April 1991 when an Alitalia flight heading into London Heathrow over Kent encountered a fast moving lozenge shape that was also tracked on radar. For a time there was a fear

that this was an accidental missile launch from a coastal base, but this option was likely eliminated and according to the records I saw whilst writing *Something in the Air* the case was accepted by the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) as a genuine UFO encounter. Not that they knew what one of those was!

Possibly the most famous event (in the US at least) happened within 5 miles of where I lived in the Peak District of Derbyshire. A British Airways Boeing 737 heading into Manchester on a flight from Milan in early January 1995 came close to a rocket shaped mass which crossed its path as it flew above the settlement of Whaley Bridge.

Although this case has often featured on TV programs discussing UFOs I personally am reasonably certain that it was an encounter with a bolide - a bright meteor that trailed gasses but was not seen from the ground owing to cloud cover. The CAA investigation found that only the Boeing was on radar and I think the crew's impression that this thing passed close by them was subjective and it was in fact much higher and further away.

Indeed there are marked similarities between this case and the famous Chiles-Whitted episode over Alabama in 1948. I personally believe that this incident was a bolide - too - based on cases that I have followed up where a trail of debris crossing the atmosphere has been perceived by witnesses as being lights or windows on the side of a rocket or cigar shaped craft.

But I do realise that theory is a contentious argument! I refer you to *Something in the Air* for a closer discussion as to why I think this solution appropriate but you are free to consider both cases more strange. The British Airways crew do not agree with my conclusions, I should add.

A real threat

However, in some respects it actually does not matter if the 1995 sighting is explicable. I think other mid air encounters probably have explanations too - such as an episode on the approach to Gatwick in Sussex when a small silvery ball crossed the path of a descending jet.

In that case I believe the UFO was a toy balloon. Whilst that might seem almost absurd (maybe even more absurd than a bolide in the above case) I have first hand experience of the possibility.

In May 1969 I witnessed from the ground a small silvery ball pace an aircraft heading over Manchester. It circled the tail fin and then pulled away as the plane banked. I was lucky enough to have a telescope handy and watched the incident through this - seeing that the ball was, in my view, almost certainly a small balloon. This had probably escaped from a fair then ongoing in a nearby park and must have got caught in the slipstream of the plane. After being tugged along it 'broke free' but only when the aircraft changed direction.

Having seen this happen all those years ago I have investigated the possibility of balloon slipstream captures involving ascending and descending jets and by all accounts this does seem to be a probable cause of a number of mid air encounters (although, of course, hardly all or even most of them).

I think it is worth bearing in mind that 90 - 95% of all UFO sightings do have a resolution as some form of IFO. And it would be unwise to imagine that a fair ratio of mid air sightings are not going to be explained away as well. Air crew are, of course, experienced observers and when they have instrumental back - up (such as radar trackings) the sighting can be very interesting and difficult to crack. But pilots are also human beings and just as likely to misperceive things as any human can be. Indeed at speed in mid air any sighting can be quite fleeting making estimates of speed, height and size almost impossible to make accurately (especially at night).

Whilst I am often accused of demeaning of the capabilities of a trained and skilled observer by saying such things, that is not the case. I am full of admiration for the skills of these mid air witnesses. But as an experienced investigator of UFO sightings - like many of you - I am also aware of how often anomalous stimuli can

and do fool the senses. Sometimes it does not matter if you are Albert the dockyard worker or Albert Einstein humans see ordinary things in extraordinary ways. It is how our senses and our brains operate. It is the fundamental principle behind many UFO sightings.

However, even if a sighting is explicable - as I think many of these mid air encounters probably are (other causes involving met balloons and military test equipment for example) - this is not to minimise the consequences. Indeed quite the reverse. I think we need to be better informed about the things that are visible up there because they are a potential threat.

The more that air crew can become aware of what they might encounter and how they might perceive it the safer air travel will be. I am very respectful of the work that Richard Haines is doing in this regard, for example.

It is extremely foolish to dismiss as irrelevant a sighting of what might be just a toy balloon on the grounds that it clearly is no risk to a huge jetliner. Physically it may not be. Neither would a bolide burning up many miles above the aircraft. But if the air crew perceive these things (as they often do) in far more intimidating fashion then the threat is very real indeed.

The risk

Of course, thankfully, pilots are highly trained to expect the unexpected, but they are bound to react instinctively when they see something heading at them that they believe might be a UFO. Who wouldn't? If unaware of the possibilities they could put the aircraft into a dive and lead to stresses on the superstructure. It may even be necessary to do this in the prevailing circumstances. But I am arguing that the more informed about UFOs (and most especially about IFOs) that air crew can be the better it will be for all of us.

So I certainly do not believe that the solving of mid air cases is a trivial matter.

Yet even if many mid air sightings are explicable that word many is not the same as all. There are cases that will be genuine encounters between an aircraft and a real UFO. Since both are flying objects and thus within their own environment the percentage of unsolved mid air cases is likely to be above the norm because aircraft are simply in the right (or wrong!) place at the right (or wrong!)

moment - unlike people on the ground and so seeing these things above their heads most of the time.

So this article is emphatically not an argument that all mid air encounters are misperceptions. And it is equally important that air crew are familiarised with the relatively remote but nonetheless real possibility that an actual UFO might cross their path one day. The more we can study these things - the more IFOs we can eliminate - and the more we can know about the unsolved phenomena that might be up there - the better we can inform those who take the great responsibility of flying us around the planet.

For often it will be our responsibility to bring forward this information. We cannot rely on the (largely poorly informed) powers that be to do it for us. And, sadly, we need to make our case with objectivity and humility - rather than to insist that every mid air encounter is a deadly brush with an alien scoutship - in order that our words might be listened to by those who quite rightly will respond to common sense rather than hysteria.

So what happened to me you might ask? Here is the story. It occurred - by the way - in the same general area (the Pennine Hills) and in the very same month (January 1995) as the British Airways episode described above.

On the 28 January I was flying home from a live TV show in Ireland where I had talked about alien abductions. The journey across the Irish Sea by a small turbo prop of Jersey European Airlines should have taken under an hour to reach Blackpool. However, things went wrong soon after take off and we had to land on the Isle of Man because of the fault. A replacement aircraft was sent for but it took many hours to arrive.

By then the weather was deteriorating, with driving icy rain and gale force winds. As the second aircraft appeared conditions were deemed too unsafe to take off. Eventually the airline decided to risk it rather than abandon plans until the next day. But we were nearly 12 hours late as we crossed the sea for the 20 minute onward flight to Blackpool. On this short hop we began to doubt the wisdom of the move. The little plane was being rocked from side to side.

As we flew over Blackpool the pilot announced (whilst we circled the seaside towns famous landmark - a tower similar to that in

Paris) that it was too dangerous to land. In fact I latter discovered the winds were sending road signs below us hurling through the air like rockets and so this was probably a wise move! We flew on across the Pennines and aimed to land at Leeds/Bradford Airport (about 70 miles away) where there were better facilities - although only slightly less severe weather.

Thankfully the little plane touched down safely (although very bumpily) at just after 6.30 pm and those of us on board burst into spontaneous applause at the skill of the crew given the terrible conditions. I doubt any of us were looking out of the window as we came in. We were just focusing on getting on the ground and on the activities of the flight crew who were seeking to reassure one passenger who had made the most of the free drinks supplied by the airline whilst we waited for hours at the Isle of Man!

A few days later a UFO sighting was routed through to me by the radio telescope and science centre at Jodrell Bank. This, of itself, is not unusual. I get many cases this way each year. But the sighting itself was to say the least fascinating.

Mrs Graham from Bradford had been out walking her dog on the evening of my flight when she noticed a small plane heading into Leeds/Bradford fighting against the winds. From the time she recalled this flight had to be ours (few other planes landed anywhere near this same time and none were small ones). As Mrs Graham watched she saw a ball of white light head towards it from the side and feared a collision. But this ball seemed to then hug the side of the aircraft and 'escort' it just a few feet away. She estimates the ball was only a foot or two in diameter. As the aircraft descended into the airport to land, the ball of light pulled away at a sharp angle and streaked away into the sky.

It is hard to know what to make of this stunning account. But Mrs Graham had no way to know that I had been on that plane when she described it to me. Her story was clearly sincere. And I do not know whether to regard this eerie tale as one big coincidence, to think that 'someone up there' was guiding me home, or to ponder if this suggests that mid air encounters are now so commonplace that it was no big deal that I got involved in one. If so then we might not be aware of anything like the full extent of the problem. Whatever the case this encounter was rather too close for comfort!

CROP CIRCLES: "SIGNS" FROM ABOVE OR HUMAN ARTIFACTS?

BY JACQUES VALLEE

(Thanks to Dave Haith <visions@ntlworld.com>)

Some personal speculations on a fractal theme.

The key to investigating anomalies often lies in asking the right questions rather than pondering a long list of assumed answers and fighting over hypotheses. The crop circles that have adorned English fields in the last couple of decades are a good example of this principle. Many well-intentioned "paranormal" investigators and New Age enthusiasts have immediately posited that the circles must be caused by Aliens, while the general opinion of journalists and academics tended to state they were the product of hoaxes. Indeed two retired men were featured in the world media as the confessed authors of many circles.

Over the years several interested researchers - including this author - have met with and interviewed self-described "artists" who had generated some complex crop formations as a new type of display where the landscape is used as a canvas to shock popular consciousness and stimulate reaction. There is no question that at least some of the formations - including some remarkably complex ones - are their handiwork.

This leaves most of the formations unexplained, especially those that have appeared in a very short time or under conditions of very high mathematical accuracy. Drawing a bicycle or a spider in a wheat field is one thing, the Mandelbrot set of fractal geometry is quite another.

When sophisticated formations started appearing in the English countryside several teams of UFO investigators (who came from a background of soil and trace studies related to the familiar imprints often left behind after sightings such as Delphos or Trans-en-Provence) began to take notice. Rather than jumping to conclusions about the origin and purpose of the formations they drew up a list of fundamental questions that went like this:

Is there a change in the nature of the formations over time? What is it, exactly, that

happens to the vegetation inside the affected areas?

Is there anything special about the location of the phenomenon? To seek information on these topics they established a protocol to gather vegetation samples and sent them to a number of laboratories for microscopic studies. The results, which have been discussed at meetings of the Society for Scientific Exploration and other public events, have never seemed of sufficient interest for the media (or, indeed, the ufological mainstream) to take notice, perhaps because they conflicted with the sensational nature of other hypotheses.

The answers are as follows:

The early formations were simple circles, then circles with satellites. In later years more and more sophisticated and precisely-drawn geometric figures appeared.

Vegetation is bent because the nodes are exploded. The stalks are not broken and indeed the plants are often reported to start growing again. All the significant formations were observed in an area in close proximity to major research facilities of the British defence establishment, often in controlled airspace.

So much for Aliens and Druids.

These studies point to the crop formations as the result of sophisticated electronic warfare experiments conducted by defence contractors. The answer to question (1) provides the first clue: If you are trying to calibrate a beam, drawing a pattern on a wheat field can yield precision information within the diameter of one stalk over hundreds of feet, an ideal test situation. The answer to question (2) narrows down the type of energy that can be responsible, because the amount of heat radiation that needs to be coupled into one node of a stalk of wheat to vaporize the water content is a known quantity, as laboratory tests in France and in the United States soon established. The answer to question (3) points to the likely authors of the tests.

It is tempting to jump to the conclusion that some sort of space-based weapon is being developed. I am reluctant to assume this because of the cost involved. Even if satellites represent the ultimate platform for such a weapon, which does not seem obvious to me, the calibration tests can be carried out far more cheaply from a conventional aircraft. In those cases when witnesses on the ground have seen formations in the process of being created, they have described a reddish glow at ground level, with the vegetation bent over in a matter of minutes.

This would be consistent with a beam directed at the field from a hovering dirigible, painting a figure very much in the same way as an electron beam "paints" a digital image on a computer screen. From conversations I have had with the investigators involved, the beam would be unlikely to be a simple infrared beam. Instead a combination of laser and microwave transmitters may be involved, or a form of maser. Perhaps the increasingly sophisticated tests are designed, precisely, to discover optimal combinations.

This leaves several issues pending: Why don't witnesses see the supposed hovering platforms if they simply fly over the countryside? What about the "confessions" of the two retired men who claimed they made the circles with a two-by-four and a piece of string? And why do the experiments continue at a point where the technology seems to have reached a high level of perfection? I only have tentative answers to this new set of questions:

Many years ago I gave a lecture on UFO research at Oxford University. One of the people attending, a physics faculty member, told me of an interesting personal experience. His hobby was to fly gliders over the English countryside. On one occasion, on a bright afternoon, he was astonished to see his plane reflected in a surface that appeared to be motionless in the atmosphere. He actually flew around the object and determined it was a perfectly reflecting cylinder. It is obvious that such a device would have "low-observable" characteristics - a visual stealth platform.

What is suspicious about the two older men's "confession" is that it appeared simultaneously on the front pages of international papers and on CNN the same day. Any published author familiar with the difficulty of getting media attention will know that it takes a very powerful public relations firm to get a story to

the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*, *Le Figaro* and many other papers the same day. Where did the two pensioners get the kind of clout that would spin their claim around the planet? The result was instantaneous: The press and, more importantly, most scientists lost all interest in the story for 10 years.

Why do the tests continue? I admit I have no good answer to this. It seems farfetched to assume that they have become more sociological than technological in nature, yet this could provide an explanation. Soon or later the truth will be known, and it can be used to discredit the community of paranormal researchers who have rushed to decipher alien scripts in the formations, or have hypothesized a return of the Druids, earth lights or messages from Gaia without first testing the basic physics of the situation. It may also be that such hypotheses have been coldly planted among the New Age milieu as part of a psychological warfare experiment, and that the real nature of the crop formations can thus be hidden from serious attention for a very long time.

Why would one need to develop such a beam? Destruction of incoming missiles (or simple confusion of their electronics) would be an obvious purpose, but several projects are already under way to produce such weapons, notably at Boeing and other defence contractors. But we may be wrong in assuming that the beam itself is a weapon; it might be used simply to guide a much larger amount of energy (contained plasma, or the fireball created by a nuclear explosion, for example) to its ultimate destination. The type of threat that is present in today's world includes targets that one may not want to blow up, but rather to fuse inside a fireball. Such a target might be a biological laboratory, or a chemical factory, where dispersion of a pathogen is undesirable. Is that what the innocent designs in English fields are really telling us to get ready for? If so, their message may be far more ominous than any communication from ETs, friendly or not.

Jacques F. Vallee

EDITOR'S NOTE: *And here's me thinking it's all done with a plank of wood...Anyhoo, Jacques article has caused a bit of a stir on the UFO Updates list. Any comments on this latest theory from readers of PRB?*

OUT-OF-THE-BODY

BY JONATHAN SLATER (YUFOS)

It recently came to my attention that a close neighbour had just come out of the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield, having had open heart surgery. Complications set in, and she was told later that all her major organs had stopped working. Betty was asleep for about two weeks; altogether she spent three weeks in intensive care. While in the hospital, she had an out of the body experience. Mrs B Spencer, who lives on the Shiregreen estate of Sheffield, has since made a full recovery from her operation.

JONATHAN SLATER: Betty are you a religious person?

BETTY: Yes, I am a Catholic and I have brought my family up in the Catholic faith

Can you say why you were in hospital?

I had an open-heart operation and just after my operation, they told me all my insides stopped working (kidneys, liver, stomach, and heart) and they told me I had about 12 machines pumping drugs into me.

I was in intensive care for about three weeks; two weeks I was asleep. So I didn't know anything that was going off "thank goodness".

Did you see a tunnel of bright light in you out-the-body-experience?

I just remember being in this building everything was white.

Can you describe what the room you saw looked like?

The building was white and all the people were in white. They were very kind to me, and put me to bed I put my hand at the side of me and I felt my husband's leg. I didn't see him but I knew it was him. By the way he's been dead six years.

This room had a lot of machinery most of the people were getting on with what they were doing. One asked me if I wanted some toast for breakfast it was all so strange. I can still see it.

Can you describe what the people you saw looked like?

I didn't recognise anyone. They all had on white overalls.

Has this experience changed your life in anyway?

No, only that I can't forget it.

Have you ever had any other paranormal experience?

Yes when I was about 17 years old I worked at 'Wilks Bros' right at the top of the building. I was a cashier, when we used to send the change down the chute in a container. It was a very old building and I remember this particular morning I wasn't very well and something told me to look round and in a split second I saw the face of the Virgin Mary or a nun.

I was terrified I ran down the stairs and at that time no one believed me. Then when I was 18 years old I met my husband to be who was a catholic and I changed to catholic and brought my three children up in the faith and one of the nuns told, I was a chosen one.

Editor's note: I find the above case - actually more typical of a Near Death Experience (NDE), interesting for a number of reasons. Many people have pointed out similarities in OBE/NDE cases and Alien Abduction accounts. Compare Betty's description of the room to that of an abductee's "spaceship" - a white room; machinery, busy people in white overalls...

I also find Betty's earlier encounter particularly revealing. Although she does not say so in the interview, I assume that it is only in later years; after her conversion to Catholicism, that the figure she might once have referred to as a ghost, is now considered to be The Virgin Mary.

Although we have no proof whether anything "real" happened to Betty in either case, it is her perception of the events that are so fascinating.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CAPTAIN SCHAFFNER – NEW EVIDENCE... CASE CLOSED.

BY DAVE BAKER

The disappearance of USAF pilot Captain William Schaffner, lost – allegedly - while chasing a UFO, has been a mainstay in UFO folklore for over a decade. I first became aware of the case in 1993 via the TV programme *UFO – No Defence Significance*, and although not at all active in it's investigation, I was aware of it re-surfacing on a number of occasions in books, magazines and on the internet. (1)

The story was always more or less the same; that the American pilot had been scrambled in his Lightning jet to intercept an unidentified flying object over the North Sea, that radar operators had watched in disbelief as the radar-blobs of the UFO and the Lightning had merged into one, and that Schaffner's jet was recovered from the sea bed a month later, with the pilot missing from a closed cockpit.

Earlier this year, in Dr. David Clarke and Andy Roberts' book *Out of The Shadows*, an alternative and altogether more rational explanation was presented.

In 2001, many records relating to the case were released at the Public Records Office, London under the 30 year rule. Clarke & Roberts examined a number of important documents, which shed vital new light on the Schaffner case. These included the Operation Record Books for RAF Binbrook, 5 Squadron (the QRA to which Schaffner was attached), Patrington (the radar station involved) and the Lightning QRA squadrons from Scotland that were supposedly scrambled to pursue the UFO.

Clarke checked the UFO reports received at S4f (Air) - the "UFO desk" later made famous by Nick Pope- for September 1970, but found no mention of any UFO interceptions in Scotland.

QRA records for the Lightning Squadrons at Leuchars showed that none of the squadrons on alert that night were scrambled, and that according to the squadron logbooks there were no 'live' scrambles at all between 8-11 September 1970.

The QTA records for Binbrook, Patrington and 5 Squadron, all describe how the base was suddenly placed on alert without warning on the night of 8 September for a TACEVAL (tactical evaluation exercise), which involved a slow moving Avro Shackleton transport entering UK airspace. Lightnings were scrambled one by one at slow speed, and Schaffner had to track, identify and 'shadow' this target, which was unknown to him.

He was actually less qualified than earlier sources had suggested and not experienced in this kind of manoeuvre. The pilot made a fatal mistake, flying too low and *beneath* the Shackleton and he had been forced down onto the surface of the sea. Clarke received a letter from Schaffner's commanding officer which confirmed all of this.

According to the official accident report, the automatic canopy release mechanism on the Lightning had malfunctioned, forcing Schaffner to open it manually in order to escape the sinking aircraft. While doing so, the pressure of the water had forced the canopy closed, severing the tether that connected the pilot to the aircraft's survival kit. It was believed that Schaffner either never made it to the surface, or was lost at sea.(2)

Clarke and Roberts book, had, for many people provided ample explanation for the case to be laid to rest as an unfortunate accident with no connection to UFOs.

Last month though, the case was once more given public prominence via the BBC TV programme *Inside Out* and it's on-line equivalent.(3) Researchers from the programme re-investigated the case on behalf of Captain Schaffner's sons, who wanted closure to the mystery surrounding their father's death and who had been understandably distressed by the rumours of alien abduction.

As we have discussed various aspects of the case at YUFOS meetings, and the group had an interest in the case, I felt that it was relevant to compile an article about Schaffner for inclusion in *Project Red Book*.

The evolvement of the Schaffner case from a tragic accident at sea to an encounter with a hostile UFO is a long and complex one and one which is still being investigated by researchers such as Clarke & Roberts, and Hull investigator Gary Anthony and consequently something of a 'hot potato'. Although I have been made fully aware of the investigation into the Schaffner case, and into the search for the original 'source' of the UFO link, I do not think it appropriate that I should present all of the information available in my own article.

These researchers have worked too hard and too long in an effort to gather all the relevant facts about the case, and it is they who should present the case-file when they see fit.

I had therefore merely planned to publish a printed version of the BBC's on-line report in *PRB*. On transferring it to 'paper' though, I considered that it lacked a little depth and background for a magazine article. I believed that in order to understand and appreciate the rational explanation for the tragedy, I had to present the alternative, and more sensationalistic explanation of events, for those who had never heard of the case at all.

What may not be common knowledge, is that at the time of Schaffner's death in 1970, media coverage treated the case as a tragic accident at sea and nothing more. There was not even the slightest hint of UFOs or 'alien intervention' until the early 1990s.

To fully understand the stark differences we must first look at the case as it has appeared in UFO folklore. I shall present here only the bare bones of the alien abduction account. There are many places interested readers can find the full story should they wish.⁽¹⁾

At the height of The Cold War, the RAF had become increasingly anxious about the number of unidentified radar returns from over the North Sea. A task force was set up track and intercept any breaches of our airspace, be they Russian intruders or bona fide UFOs. 'Operation Aenid' consisted of a chain of 37 radar stations, all in contact with RAF High Wycombe and RAF Rudloe Manor (itself long associated in the UFO community with UFO investigation and conspiracy theories).

At 8:17 pm on September 8th 1970, RAF Saxa Ford in the Shetland Islands picked up an unknown target travelling southwest over the North Sea, between the Shetlands and Alesund, Norway. It maintained a steady speed of 630

mph at an altitude of 37,000 feet for several minutes, then turned 30 degrees to head due south, accelerating to 900mph.

Two Lightning Interceptors were scrambled from RAF Leucars on the coast of Scotland to intercept. Before they could reach the target, it executed a 180 degree turn and headed north at a staggering 17,400 mph, vanishing from Saxa Fords radar screens.

For the next hour, the object, or others like it, was detected numerous times on radar, and more attempts were made to intercept it, with Lightnings, and later with more sophisticated USAF F4-Phantoms scrambled from the US base in Keflavik, Iceland. The object always managed to turn and disappear northwards before visual contact could be made.

As tension increased, RAF Fylingdales in the UK, and NORAD HQ at Cheyenne Mountain, USA, were alerted and started monitoring the activity themselves. It was at the request of a "highly placed source" at NORAD which resulted in Captain William Schaffner being drafted in to intercept the object.

Schaffner, part of an exchange programme between the RAF and the USAF, was stationed at RAF Binbrook in North Lincolnshire. He duly took off in his Lightning LX 894 at 10:06 pm on an intercept course and, unlike the aircraft before him, actually managed to catch up with the unidentified object.⁽⁴⁾

The following is purported to be the "official transcript" of the conversation between Captain Schaffner and Radar Station Staxton Wold, in North Lincolnshire, which was leaked by "a reliable source".

It is this transcript which has found its way onto the internet and elsewhere...

Schaffner: I have visual contact, repeat visual contact. Over.

Staxton: Can you identify aircraft type?

Schaffner: Negative, nothing recognisable, no clear outlines. There is ... bluish light. Hell that's bright ... very bright.

Staxton: Are your instruments functioning, 94? Check compass. Over.

Schaffner: Affirmative, GCI (ground control). I'm alongside it now, maybe 600ft off my ... Jeeze, that's bright, it hurts my eyes to look at it for more than a few seconds.

Staxton: How close are you now?

Schaffner: About 400ft, he's still in my three o'clock. Hey wait ... there's something else. It's like a large soccer ball. It's like it's made of glass.

Staxton: Is it part of the object or independant? Over.

Schaffner: It ... no, it's separate from the main body ... the conical shape ... it's at the back end, the sharp end of the shape. It's like bobbing up and down and going from side to side slowly. It may be the power source. There's no sign of ballistics.

Staxton: Is there any sign of occupation? Over.

Schaffner: Negative, nothing.

Staxton: Can you assess the rate?

Schaffner: Contact in gentle descent. Am going with it...50...no about 70ft ... it's levelled out again.

Staxton: Is the ball object still with it? Over.

Schaffner: Affirmative. It's not actually connected ... maybe a magnetic attraction to the conical shape. There's a haze of light. Ye'ow ... it's within heat haze. Wait a second, it's turning... coming straight for me... am taking evasive action...a few...I can hard...

Staxton: 94? Come in 94. Foxtrot 94, are you receiving? Over. Come in 94. Over.

A few minutes later...

Schaffner: GCI ... are you receiving? Over.

Staxton: Affirmative 94. What is your condition? Over.

Schaffner: Not too good. I can't think what has happened... I feel kinda dizzy... I can see shooting stars.

Staxton: Can you see your instruments? Over.

Schaffner: Affirmative, but er...the compass is useless ...

Staxton: Foxtrot 94, turn 043 degrees. Over.

Schaffner: Er ... all directional instruments are out, repeat useless. Over.

Staxton: Roger 94, execute turn right, estimate quarter turn. Over.

Schaffner: Turning now.

Staxton: Come further 94. That's good. Is your altimeter functioning? Over.

Schaffner: Affirmative GCI.

Staxton: Descend to 3,500ft. Over.

Schaffner: Roger GCI.

Staxton: What's your fuel state 94? Over.

Schaffner: About 30 per cent GCI.

Staxton: That's what we calculated. Can you tell us what happened 94? Over.

Schaffner: I don't know. It came in close ... I shut my eyes ... I figure I must've blacked out for a few seconds.

Staxton: OK 94. Standby.

Schaffner: Can you bring me in GCI? Over.

Staxton: Er... Hold Station, 94. Over.

A few minutes later...

Staxton: Foxtrot 94. Can you ditch aircraft? Over.

Schaffner: She's handling fine. I can bring her in. Over.

Staxton: Negative 94. I repeat, can you ditch aircraft? Over.

Schaffner: Yeah ... I guess.

Staxton: Standby 94. Over. Oscar 77. Over.

Shackleton: 77. Over.

Staxton: 94 is ditching. Can you maintain wide circuit. Over.

Shackleton: Affirmative GCI. Over.

Staxton: Thanks 77. Stanby 94, execute ditching procedure at your discretion. Over.

Schaffner: Descending now, GCI. Over.

A month later, the Lightning was recovered from the North Sea bed, with the canopy closed, the ejector seat intact, and Schaffner's body nowhere to be found.

How could the pilot of the Lightning have vanished from within a closed cockpit?

How indeed...

Next, we present the *BBC-Inside Out*- on-line report on the Schaffner case, which appeared on Monday 16th September 2002. It should be

pointed out that the segment on Schaffner appeared on the regional edition of the programme broadcast in the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire regions. Other regions may have not have covered the story.

The following text appears unabridged, but as the BBC do not hold the copyright to many of the photographs which appear in the article, for instance those of William Schaffner and the wreckage of the Lightning being recovered

from the sea, I unfortunately cannot reproduce them here.

Most importantly, compare the transcript of Schaffner's conversation with Staxton Wold from the internet, to that officially released by the MOD...

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FRESH EVIDENCE ON YORKSHIRE ALIEN ABDUCTION © BBC

(Published with the kind permission of BBC Online)

Britain's most plausible alien abduction happened off the East Yorkshire coast, according to some UFOlogists.

The incident happened in September 1970. Foxtrot 94, an RAF Lightning fighter jet crashed into the North Sea.

UFOlogists claim its pilot, Captain William Schaffner was abducted by an alien spacecraft after he'd scrambled to intercept it off Flamborough Head.

The Lightning aircraft was recovered three months later from the seabed. Remarkably, it was virtually undamaged.

The cockpit canopy was shut but there was no sign of Captain Schaffner's body.

The unusual condition of the wreckage fuelled UFOlogists speculations of an alien abduction.

These claims are the talk of UFO Internet sites, as are bogus transcripts of the Captain's last radio conversation with RAF Patrington.

Captain William Schaffner was a 28-Year-old American exchange officer.

His family were never told the results of the official inquiry into the crash.

The Ministry of Defence has previously insisted that the report on the crash was shredded.

His sons, Glenn and Mike Schaffner, have been trying to discover the truth about their father's disappearance for years.

Their efforts have not solved the mystery.

Until now.

BREAKTHROUGH

Secret documents and classified photographs of the RAF fighter have been exclusively obtained from the Ministry of Defence by the BBC's Inside Out team.

The following will finally give the brothers the information they desire and deserve:

- A copy of the inquiry report
- A transcript of the Captain's final conversation with ground controllers
- Pictures showing the pilot's empty cockpit

The inquiry report makes the following points:

It was not a UFO but a slow moving Shackleton reconnaissance aircraft that the Captain was trying to intercept on an exercise

Its crew had lost radio contact.

Then, by the light of a flare, they'd seen the aircraft in the water.

The Captain had simply flown too low trying to get beneath his target and hit the sea.

Captain Schaffner had not been properly trained to carry out the exercise he had been asked to undertake.

When he tried to bail out, his ejector seat failed to operate.

ACCIDENT

These points appear to suggest that the crash was an unfortunate accident with a plausible explanation. This should destroy some of the alien abduction rumours, which have angered and upset Captain Schaffner's sons for years.

OPPOSITION

A few budding UFOlogists may still not accept this explanation, due to distrust of the Ministry of Defence documentation.

Former North Yorkshire policeman Tony Dodd told *Inside Out*, "I don't think that we will ever get to the bottom of what happened because the RAF would never accept that a UFO could be involved."

Reporter Sophie Hull said, "Some aspects of Capt. Schaffner's disappearance can't be explained.

"But we believe this is as close to a detailed explanation of what actually happened that anyone will get."

It appears to be enough for Captain Schaffner's sons. They can now concentrate on enjoying their father's memory in peace.

Transcript of tape recording at RAF Patrington concerning incident to Mission CPM45 at 20:45 Hours on the 8th September 1970.

Fighter Controller: Time check 20:30.

Capt. Schaffner's Wingman: 52.

Fighter Controller: Is the target heading about 250° again?

Capt. Schaffner's Wingman: Affirmative but I shall not have enough fuel to accompany to land if he does cross territorial waters.

Fighter Controller: Roger 52.

CC Assistant: controller please - will you tell him that his fighter 45 is airborne at 20:30. I think that's him there.

Cont / Asst: 20:30? Yes - OK thank you.

Capt. Schaffner's Wingman: 52 check about 45 miles from point alpha?

Fighter Controller: 52 that's affirmative and 45 is south of you at this time range 35 not on channel yet.

Capt. Schaffner's Wingman: Roger.

Fighter Controller: 52 on this heading Flamborough Head is dead ahead of you, range 20 miles.

Capt. Schaffner's Wingman: 52.

Fighter Controller: 52 is the target still at 1500 feet?

Capt. Schaffner's Wingman: Affirmative.

Fighter Controller: Roger.

Capt. Schaffner: Mission 45 airborne at one zero zero.

Fighter Controller: Roger 45 Patrington port 335 over.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger understood on a port turn 335 a heading of 100.

Fighter Controller: Roger 45 have you weapon contact and the target is north-west of you range 35 at this time and his height is at 1500 feet.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger 45 copied - level 100 until close.

Fighter Controller: 45.

Fighter Controller: 45 the OHH is 986 - 52 is with the target at this time shadowing and your task will be to take over from 52.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger.

Fighter Controller: Buster buster target range 28.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger buster.

Capt. Schaffner: Target heading?

Fighter Controller: 45 the last target heading was 250. 52 Patrington confirm target heading?

Capt. Schaffner's Wingman: 52 affirmative and the target speed I estimate at no faster than 160 knots.

Fighter Controller: Roger - did you get that 45?

Capt. Schaffner: Got it.

Fighter Controller: Roger.

Fighter Controller: 45 on 335 target is 10 right to you range 21.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger descending.

Fighter Controller: Roger 45.

Capt. Schaffner: 45 will descend to five.

Fighter Controller: Roger.

Fighter Controller: 45 target is holding at 10 to 15 left and the range 17½.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger looking.

Fighter Controller: 45 one instruction was if the aircraft crosses the International Boundary Line he is to be ordered to follow you back to Binbrook.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger.

Fighter Controller: 45 the target is now 35 left range 13½.

Capt. Schaffner: 45 roger at 5,000.

Capt. Schaffner: 45 is armament safety check complete.

Fighter Controller: 45 say again.

Capt. Schaffner: 45 is armed safe.

Fighter Controller: Roger 45.

Fighter Controller: 45 the target has moved 45 left range 10.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger.

Fighter Controller: 45 Port 310 over.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger Port 310.

Capt. Schaffner: 52 check height.

Capt. Schaffner's Wingman: 52 is at 1,500 feet with the target at 2,00 yards.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger.

Fighter Controller: 45 make speed decimal 95 over.

Capt. Schaffner: 45 roger? That's pretty fast.

Fighter Controller: Roger 45 make it a speed commensurate with your endurance then, that target range 10 at this moment. I think we've got enough to catch up at this speed, he's only 160 kts.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger.

Capt. Schaffner's Wingman: 52 be leaving the target in about 2 minutes.

Fighter Controller: Roger 52 understood.

Capt. Schaffner: 45's now at 2,000.

Fighter Controller: Roger 45.

Fighter Controller: 52 your pigeons to alpha 200 range 32.

Capt. Schaffner's Wingman: 200 32 copied.

Fighter Controller: 45 on 310 targets at 40 left, range 7½.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger.

Fighter Controller: 45 be advised the targets about 12 miles off Flamborough Head on his present heading.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger.

Fighter Controller: 45 port 250 over.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger turning port 250.

Fighter Controller: 45 target range 6½ - 7.

Capt. Schaffner: Contact with a set of lights in that area.

Fighter Controller: Say again.

Capt. Schaffner: Set of lights in that area - closing.

This took place at at 20:45 Hours on September 8, 1970.

Fighter Controller: 45 your in a clutter area of mine at the moment - keep a sharp look out please.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger I'm watching em.

Fighter Controller: Keep a close look out for Flamborough Head it's about range 6½ now.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger.

Fighter Controller: 45 Patrington changing controllers.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger.

Capt. Schaffner: 45 the target looks like he's heading about 180.

Fighter Controller: Roger.

Fighter Controller: 45 estimated range from the coast now 5 miles - if he comes within 3 miles he is to be escorted to Binbrook.

Capt. Schaffner: Roger.

Capt. Schaffner Wingman: 52 steady 180 - 5,000 ft for recovery.

Fighter Controller: 52 Northern Radar have you contact would you squawk ident and call them on stud 4 - if no joy back to me.

Fighter Controller: 45 Patrington amendment to previous instruction - if target aircraft approaches within 3 miles of the UK coast line he is to be directed to land at Waddington - I say again - directed to land at Waddington.

Fighter Controller: 45 Patrington be advised you're dark to me at this time.

Fighter Controller: 45 Patrington you are dark to me this time - check target's heading and your own over.

Fighter Controller: 45 Patrington nothing heard.

Fighter Controller: C45 C45 Patrington do you read over.

Fighter Controller: C45 C45 Patrington - over.

Fighter Controller: 45 Patrington do you read.

Fighter Controller: 45 Patrington nothing heard.

Fighter Controller: 45 Patrington if you read me your standby channel fighter stud 30 - call Bawdsey fighter stud 30 - over.

Fighter Controller: 45 Patrington still nothing heard if you're this frequency would you call Bawdsey fighter stud 5 or 30 fighter stud 30 call Bawdsey.

Background noise ceases on this tape and the remaining 16 minutes of tape bear no recording.

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AFTERWORD

The Schaffner case stands as a significant and sobering lesson to the whole field of ufology. It is far too tempting to accept theories and "facts" at face value, to believe the most exciting hypothesis, to see what we *want* to see in order to see 'the truth'. So many UFO encounters are re-hashed and re-distributed in books, TV shows and magazine articles, and presented therein as undeniable and absolute fact, without even the barest check on their authenticity. There are other such cases, some of them regarded as "classics" of UFO lore, which have absolutely no basis in reality whatsoever.

More importantly, this case has a strong emotional angle too. Unlike many stories in the annals of ufology, from sprawling spectacles such as Roswell and Rendlesham, through claims of alien abduction and contactees, right down to the most run-of-the-mill sighting of a simple light in the sky, a very real human tragedy is at its centre; the loss of a man's life, and the devastating impact upon his family.

Most participants in UFO cases have brought *themselves* into the limelight and publicity, even if in some of them do not realise the

potential minefield they are choosing to enter. It is *their* encounter, *their* report and they have chosen to – possibly – become part of UFO legend and folklore and whatever that may bring to them.

Captain William Schaffner and his family did not seek this infamous publicity. It has been forced upon them by others, either by intention – those who deliberately mutated the case from accident to abduction, or those who thoughtlessly continued to promote the story as an alien abduction without first checking on its veracity.

No one is suggesting that this has been done maliciously or for selfish personal gain. All of us though, must bear some responsibility for the words we write, and the long-range ramifications of our work.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Gary Anthony, an experienced independent researcher from Hull, has been investigating the Schaffner case since 1992. Even back then, Gary had many reasons to believe that the case – however tragic – was definitely *not* UFO-related, and there was no reason to continue to treat it as such.

As more evidence has come to light, Gary, along with other researchers such as Andy Roberts and Dr. David Clarke, have gathered more evidence, files and testimony to prove once and for all – beyond the boundaries of the *BBC Online* investigation – that the Schaffner case can be closed.

Gary hopes to gather all of this evidence into a definitive report – and on completion, this important case shall be published in *Project Red Book* and in *EYE Magazine*.

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MORE FROM "MUHNOCHWA"

The Muhnochwa, or "Face-Scratcher", (see last issue) continues to spread terror, panic and indeed injury and death in India. With no sign of the epidemic abating, here is a selection of the latest stories of this social-panic-in-the-making.-DB

FACE-SCRATCHER FEAR: IIT HAS A FACE-SAVER CALLED BALL LIGHTNING (*Indian Express* | 20 Aug 2002)

Rumour region: 1 more killed

New Delhi, August 19: Even as officials float fanciful, even bizarre, theories on the mysterious flying mauler terrorising eastern UP, (Uttar Pradesh) here's the official word: ball lightning.

It's a rare, mobile form of lightning that has frequently been mistaken for unidentified flying objects (UFO) in the past. When the rains pass, so should the hysteria, a UP government source privy to the report told *The Indian Express*. The report, authored by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur, was submitted to the UP Home Department today.

But the reign of the muhnochwa (face-scratcher) continues. Last night, a man accidentally killed his mother while shooting at a light he believed was the creature plaguing one of India's most backward -- and rumour-prone -- regions.

The ball lightning presumption will clearly take some selling. UP's own officials are lining up the theories. Genetically engineered insects from Pakistan is one. Laser-equipped terrorists is theory. After all, victims report seeing a flashing red light, then suffer facial injuries. Saner explanations: Disoriented migratory birds, bats or locust swarms.

Such hysteria isn't new to eastern UP. Only six years ago this region, with human development indices that rival sub-Saharan Africa, was in the thrall of the manai (the man creature) After more than 20 babies were killed, the panic enabled all manner of scores to be settled; 40 people were lynched in various incidents then. The baby-lifters turned out to be a pack of wolves that had lost their habitat and natural prey in a region plagued by deforestation.

"People now see satellites moving across the night sky and say it's the muhnochwa," says

Ashok Singh, former UP chief wildlife warden who hunted down the wolves in 1996.

"If you develop a rumour, it spreads like wildfire in these areas," says Singh.

Yet it was just yesterday, after one person was killed in police firing on a hysterical mob, that DIG Faizabad K N D Dwivedi said the muhnochwa was a three to six-inch-long insect "brought from outside India," developed with "special technology by anti-national elements."

Today, after being upbraided by Lucknow, Dwivedi isn't forthcoming about his theory. "Even if I have said it, I have not said it," he says and laughs. So what is the muhnochwa anyway? "It could be animals, insects, anything."

"No one talks of a living being though," says Arvind Kumar, district magistrate of Kanpur in central UP, new muhnochwa territory. "They all talk of a mechanical thing with flashing lights."

One of India's leading ecologists suggests that the administration would do well to call in an entomologist. "All they really need to do is to contact the nearest office of the Zoological Survey of India or even one from the Agriculture department," says Raghavendra Gadagkar, chairman of the Centre For Ecological Sciences at Bangalore's Indian Institute of Science.

Bats, he explains, are known to bite people.

MUHNOCHWA HAUNTS MAYAWATI (*Manjari Mishra Times of India* | 21 Aug 2002)

LUCKNOW: The raging muhnochwa (face-scratcher) controversy dogging Uttar Pradesh for the last two months took an unexpected twist on Tuesday with chief minister Mayawati blaming the opposition Samajwadi Party for raising the monster bogey in order to destabilise her government.

Mayawati on Monday lambasted her political rivals for engineering violence in Barabanki that claimed the life of one of the villagers

agitating against the recurrent attacks by the mysterious object.

And even as debate over such a possibility rages, the basic question still remains unanswered: What exactly is muhnochwa which has sidelined and even overshadowed all other activities in the state?

The issue led to unprecedented bedlam in the state legislative assembly on Friday as Samajwadi MLAs, alleging a foreign hand in the attacks, demanded a thorough inquiry.

It has been probed into by the intelligence agencies, forensic experts, medico-legal experts, electronic enjoiners, physicists, psychiatrists, IIT faculty members, local administrative and police officials -- but each version has only confounded the prevailing confusion.

The bizarre happening, which led to much panic, began in Mirzapur, Chandauli and Varanasi and gradually spread over the adjacent districts of Sultanpur, Sitapur, Rai Bareilly, Pratapgarh, Lakhimpur Kheri, Pilibhit, Lucknow, Kanpur, Allahabad... all of eastern Uttar Pradesh.

And as the death toll of the victims rises by the day, agencies pitted against the unknown enemy find the pressure building up from all quarters.

The harassed Lucknow police is even contemplating booking rumour-mongers under the National Security Act. Forest officials are worried over the merciless killing of squirrels, foxes, bats, hyenas and wolves by terrified villagers.

Predictably, the incidents have contributed to many a goof-up. Like a high-ranking police official stating it was a "technologically developed insect... released by anti-social elements." Or the much-hyped carcass in Lucknow that turned out to be a harmless insect from the grasshopper family.

Even IIT scientist became the butt of ridicule when they propounded the theory that muhnochwa was a "ring of gas" or "ball of lightning" emerging due to the drought. But while some injuries have been found to be self inflicted, and there have been stray man with long hair, blood-shot eyes and claws like that of a tiger.

Others describe him as a robot who emits blue,

incidents of mischief, the "genuine cases" have baffled the authorities.

There have been no mistaking the bloody scratches on the victims' bodies, some of whom have suffered severe trauma, requiring hospitalisation and prolonged treatment.

The victims' descriptions are eerily similar -- blue and red lights, a moving object, sudden attack and electric shock -- defying all rational explanations.

So, when an expert in Allahabad demanded the intervention of the National Human Rights Commission, only a few in the city found it funny.

'MUHNOCHWA' MONSTER A BALL OF LIGHTNING: IIT (*abridged*)

(*Vinay Krishna Rastogi Sify News [India] | 21 Aug 2002*)

Dr Ravindra Arora, an eminent scientist heading a team to delve deep into the mystery of the entity said the injured men and women fell prey "to a ball of lightning" which is caused due to ineffective man-made or natural light conductors.

Some say that it is plasma state of gas while others attribute it to a slowly burning gas-- radiation from long-lived meta stable state of air particles, a sphere of heated air at atmospheric pressure. It can produce at least 100 watts of current emitting red, blue, yellow and green colours.

As the ball collides with the uncovered part of body, it causes skin burning and rashes. Scientists say that the ball of lighting ceases to exist if it collides with non-living object.

In many areas the incidents of attack were videographed and compact discs prepared by district magistrates which were given to scientists.

At least 100 have so far been injured and the mass hysteria has led thousands to stay up at night, burning bonfires and maintaining night-long vigil on roof-tops with torches to ward away the "monster".

There are several versions of what the "monster" looks like -- some say he is a huge red yellow and green light when attacking his victim. Some described him as half-dog, half-human who flies after attacking the victims.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD...AND BEYOND!!!

UFOS, CONSPIRACIES, FORTEAN AND PARANORMAL EVENTS
COMPILED BY DAVE BAKER

LARGE CELESTIAL OBJECT FALLS TO EARTH IN SIBERIA

Gazeta Russia - Residents of Bodaibo in the Irkutsk region of Siberia were eye witnesses to the descent of a large celestial object.

Scientists think it might have been a meteorite. The regional staff of the Ministry for Civil Defence and Emergencies reported on Thursday that they had been informed about the unusual phenomenon by the Institute of Solar and Earth Psychics of the Eastern Siberian Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Scientists said that Bodaibo residents had witnessed the fall of a very large, luminous body, which looked like a huge boulder.

The unidentified object fell in the hills in the taiga between the villages of Bodaibo and Balakhninsky. Although that place is located far from the two villages, people felt a tremor comparable to an earthquake, the source said. They also heard a loud noise. Sporadic flashes have been seen above the site.

'METEOR' LIGHTS UP MIDLANDS (BBC News, 6 October, 2002)

A burning object seen streaking across West Midlands skies on Sunday morning may have been a meteor, astronomers have said.

The streaking fireball was seen heading south, shortly before 0600 BST.

Its passage was followed by a bright flash which lit up the sky.

Sightings of the object were reported at sites including Coventry, England's south coast and Wales.

Andy Salmon, from the Birmingham Astronomical Society, said it may have been a meteor - space debris burning up in the atmosphere.

He also suggested it may have been a man-

made object, such a satellite re-entering the atmosphere, or a rocket being launched.

"Meteors can happen at any time... there's no predicting when it may happen," he said.

One witness said the object had a tail. "All of a sudden I've seen this light streak across the sky... the front of the light was much larger than what you would call the tail," he said.

The BBC's Ben Godfrey saw the fireball as he arrived at work. "It was reminiscent of a meteor you might see in a film... it was huge," he said.

Local aviation authorities confirmed the object was not aircraft-related.

It has been an eventful period for the West Midlands in nature terms, with the region shaken by an earth tremor on 23 September.

'BIG BALL OF FIRE' METEOR (The Denver Post, 08 Oct 2002)

Monday, October 07, 2002 - A fireball with a long tail streaked westward across the western United States' sky Sunday night, causing witnesses from Boulder to Durango to Salt Lake City and even Idaho to call authorities with vivid descriptions of what was probably a meteor burning up in Earth's atmosphere.

"We've gotten several reports of brilliant white light the size of a basketball with blue flames turning to orange," Chaffee County sheriff dispatcher Jeanette Stephens said.

Debbie Taylor, staff duty officer with the Federal Aviation Administration in Seattle, said she got calls from Denver, Salt Lake City and Idaho, and the observers "called it everything possible from a UFO to a fireball to a meteor to a mid-air collision."

"What people saw are the characteristics of a meteor," said Denver Museum of Nature & Science spokeswoman Julia Taylor. "The different colours are from the chemical composition of the meteor as it burns and cools."

Douglas Duncan, the director of the Fiske Planetarium at the University of Colorado at Boulder, said that fireballs are usually meteors or man-made space debris entering the atmosphere.

Duncan said that it is difficult to judge how large a meteor is by how bright or how big it looks.

"A big, bright one looks pretty close, but we know that they burn 60 to 100 miles up," Duncan said, adding that the space shuttle and the Hubble telescope orbit approximately 300 miles above the Earth.

If witnesses over a large area view the meteor, Duncan said, it is possible to triangulate an approximate position for a meteorite, but he said the chances of finding a meteorite are small because they are hard to distinguish from surrounding rocks.

NEW MOON FOR URANUS

(By Dr David Whitehouse, BBC News Online science editor, 4 October, 2002)

Astronomers have discovered a small moon circling the distant planet Uranus. They say it is among the faintest objects ever detected in our Solar System.

It was first seen in August 2001, but quickly lost amid the glare from Uranus. It was only rediscovered and confirmed a few weeks ago, in August and September 2002.

"The extraordinary small moons we detected around Saturn convinced us that there should be similarly sized small moons around Uranus," Dr J Kavelaars of the National Research Council of Canada told *BBC News Online*. "Now we have found them."

Until 1997, Uranus was the only gas-giant planet in our Solar System without any known small moons. Now, including the latest one, six are known to orbit the planet.

Kavelaars' team included Matthew Holman, of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Jean-Marc Petit, of the Observatoire de Besancon in France, Brett Gladman of the University of British Columbia and Dan Milisavljevic of McMaster University in Canada.

"We have looked at the Solar System in finer

detail than anyone else before," said Dr Kavelaars.

To find the moonlet, the astronomers used large telescopes in Chile. The search technique, developed by Gladman and Kavelaars, has led to many new discoveries of faint objects in the outer Solar System.

These latest findings appear to support the theory that the small satellites are the remnants of a collision between a much larger body, orbiting around Uranus, and a passing comet. The irregular satellites, which have no preferred orbital plane, are likely to be the chunks of material ejected from the surface of the parent object or objects.

The new discovery, officially called S 2001 U1, is just a few tens of kilometres across at most. It is so faint that even the best telescopes are having trouble tracking it.

Irregular satellites are those whose orbits are either very non-circular or very inclined with respect to the equatorial plane of the planet. They also tend to be very distant from the planet.

AIR TRAFFIC STAFF SEE 'GHOST PLANES'

(BBC News online, 10 October 2002)

"Ghost planes" are appearing on computer screens at the new national air traffic control centre at Swanwick.

It is believed the phantom aircraft, which appear over the North Sea, are caused by screens showing incorrect radar data.

It is the latest glitch to hit the £623m centre in Hampshire since it opened in January.

A spokesman for National Air Traffic Services (Nats) insisted safety was not being compromised by the non-existent planes. Staff warned.

The Nats spokesman said: "The ghosting problem has affected only a few screens and only affects an area of the North Sea.

"Safety has not been compromised, but, nevertheless, we felt it right to issue a notice to employees."

Nats has now warned controllers at Swanwick of the problem and told them to keep aircraft

further apart than normal if the phenomenon occurs.

The problem is only one of a number encountered by the multi-million pound centre.

Recently controllers said they were concerned they might misread the height of planes because of difficulty in reading numbers on their screens.

Controllers have said the latest "ghost" problem did not occur at their centre in West Drayton, west London - the centre that Swanwick is replacing.

FAMILY IN 'MAJOR' SIGHTING OF UFO

(*Evening Standard* via *ThisIsDerbyshire* 04 October 2002)

A cigar-shaped UFO drifted over Ilkeston - and then did an encore.

A family, from Kirk Hallam, say it appeared to head for the village of West Hallam before returning from whence it came at about 7.45pm on Monday.

The mother, father and son, who do not want to be named, have lodged a detailed report with the Derby-based Phenomena Research Association.

They also called Derbyshire police, who did not receive any other reports.

Although looking like a cigar, they say it flew sideways and had a series of lights.

The mother watched the object through binoculars from the family home.

She said: "I have never seen anything like it. There's no aeroplane like that. It seemed to float across and there was this hum coming from it.

Her son first saw the UFO while he was looking towards Little Hallam Hill, and alerted his parents.

The object had two rows of white lights near each end. Underneath were two yellow lights - and a red pulsating beam.

The centre of the craft was dark and it was difficult to gauge its size. But the mother held a biro at arm's length and said it appeared as long as that.

The UFO came from the direction of the Stanton Works and later headed back that way.

Omar Fowler, Phenomena Research Association spokesman, said: "The family said that it made a low-pitched droning noise and that is typical of a large UFO craft.

"It is a major sighting and points to an increase in activity in the Ilkeston area."

DIAMOND-SHAPED CRAFT SIGHTED OVER CALGARY

(*Melissa Ridgen The Calgary Sun*, 10-4-2)

Area 51, move over - Deer Run may be taking over as destination of choice for visitors from outer space.

A southeast Calgary family saw a strange sight in the sky Tuesday evening, hours before a northern lights display danced overhead.

Tammy Woodward's boyfriend came into their Deer Run home around 7 p.m., to get her to look at an odd object he'd spotted in the sky.

"The sun was just going down and the sky was perfectly clear except for this thing," said Woodward. "We saw what looked like a small piece of really bright-white cloud but it was moving way too fast to be a cloud," said Woodward, whose two children also saw it.

"It was going really fast, west-northwest. It was diamond-shaped and it was gone from sight over other houses in about 10 seconds," the 34-year-old said.

Environment Canada meteorologist Bill McMurtry is at a loss as to what the family saw.

It could have been an aircraft, satellite or meteorite - but he doubts it was, because the latter two aren't visible while it's light out, and most people know a plane when they see one.

On Sept. 6, 1991, three people in the city's Monterey Park reported three amber, diamond-shaped lights moving in the eastern sky.

An unexplained spectacle was also witnessed in Edmonton, according to the Alberta UFO Study Group. On Sept. 13, a person in Edmonton saw 10 yellow-white lights moving "fast like a fighter jet" to the northeast, then disappearing 30 seconds later.

TALKIN' BOLLOXINSKI

With the USA's most maverick investigator of the paranormal, Tom Bolloxinski.

Now I know what you've all been thinking. "I've had a great summer holiday in Ibiza; Jeffrey Archer's still in prison; *Lord Of The Rings* has been released to buy on DVD; and *The Office* is back on TV, but what I really need is a dose of Bolloxinski. I wonder what the leading force in paranormal investigation and alien research has been up to lately?"

Well, quite a lot actually.

I've just added the finishing touches to my latest book *"Grey Dudes, Blonde Babes and Rotten Reptilians: The Alien A-Z of Extra-terrestrial Life."* By Tom Bolloxinski.

It's fantastic, and with the kind permission of my publisher Haphazard House, PRB will be printing extracts from it in the next issue. Hey, it's got the lot, everything from Adamski, George, to Zigmund Adamski. Cool!

I came across this little gem in one of your papers...

RODS FROM SPACE IN RENDLESHAM
(*Evening Star*, [Ipswich] September 21, 2002)

UFO fanatic Peter Parish claims that strange rod-like beings have been spotted in Rendlesham Forest, adding to the list of peculiar events said to have taken place there.

The latest unexplained phenomenon, which Mr Parish thinks is from another dimension, has been labelled the Rendlesham Rods.

Mr Parish, 44, of Thellusson Road, Rendlesham, first saw them on the evening of August 31 and has since caught them on camera.

There have already been reports of similar rods being seen in America, Scotland and throughout Europe.

Mr Parish and friend Brenda Butler, 58, are fascinated by this phenomenon and he said: "They are either coming from another dimension or they are unknown creatures that can travel at a tremendous speed."

He claims they are invisible to the naked eye but can be picked up on camera. He believes

the aliens can communicate with people and drop stones from the sky.

Mr Parish, who works as a groundsman, said: "They are quite intelligent. They seem to communicate with people. Stones have been dropping out of the sky but whether they are to do with the rods I don't know."

"I asked the rods if they were from another dimension. I told them to drop one stone if they were and two stones if they were not and they dropped one stone."

Who said your English papers were full of crap?

Now I know that they're regular contributors to *Project Red Book*, and pretty friendly with editor Dave Baker and all, but those two so-called "researchers", Clarke & Roberts, messing around in their precious "Public Records Offices", digging up so-called "authentic", "actual" files of "real" UFO encounters, and finding hitherto unknown secret military investigations into UFOs....call that important research?

Talking to invisible ultra-fast unknown space-alien from another dimension in the middle of a forest via the medium of stones ...now *that's* what I call research!

More importantly, this answers a mystery that's been bugging me for some time. To promote the U.S. paperback edition of my book *Rendlesham - The Elvis Connection*, I did a small U.S. tour of Elvis Presley fan clubs. Many of these are held outdoors, and as I regaled the Presley faithful with my Aliens abducted Elvis theories, I was under constant attack by "thrown" stones. And some of them hurt! I was extremely upset by this, for I could not understand what "Pelvis" fans could have against me...

But now of course I realise...it wasn't the Elvis fans that were pelting me. It was Rods! Invisible, supersonic Rods, telling me that my theories are right! "Yes!" the little suckers were saying. "Yes! Yes! Yes!"

Ain't ufology beautiful?

MAGAZINE EXCHANGES

ANIMALS & MEN

Centre for Fortean Zoology (CFZ)
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Cheques made payable to Jonathan Downes

Regular readers of *Project Red Book* will be more than familiar with cryptozoologist Jon Downes and the work of the CFZ.

The magazine is a 40+ page A5 format, well illustrated with black & white photographs.

Animals & Men could be described as Jon's personality put into paper, being vastly entertaining, thoroughly informative, and with a wicked sense of humour throughout. *A & M* covers all aspects of fortean zoology from newly discovered species of centepede to Chinese Lake Monsters, Skunk Apes, and Exotic Big Cats.

Highlights of issues 26-28 include *Bunnyman – Man, Myth or Monster*, an interview with explorer Col. John Blashford Snell, *The Black Dog of Lyme*, *The Cleadon Puma*, and *Catfish Rising*, the story of the CFZ's hunt for The Monster of the Mere.

EYE MAGAZINE

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"For ufologists by ufologists", *EYE Magazine* is a relatively new publication jointly edited by Chris Evers & Gary Anthony, independent researchers from Hull. Chris used to publish the magazine *Faster Than Light*, and *EYE* continues it's A5, colour format, very well produced and pleasing to the eye (no pun intended!)

Vol. 1, #3, (Autumn 2002) includes *Ufology – is There Life After Death* by Jenny Randles, *Declassification* by Spanish ufologist Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos, a study of released Spanish military documents, part two of *The Mind Parasites* by Clive B. Potter, among reviews news items and reports.

FANTHORPE'S

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Richly illustrated with black & white photos, Fanthorpe's is a 30 page A5 magazine, which describes itself as the "Quarterly Digest of the Paranormal" Although focusing most prominently on ghosts, poltergeists and ESP, other subjects such as UFOs, Time Travel and the Knights Templar are regularly featured.

Articles from Vol 1 #1 – Vol 2 #1 are wide and eclectic, including *The Day They Captured Nessie*, *The Croglin Grange Vampire*, *The Queen's House Spectre*, and *Enfield and Beyond*. A regular feature focuses on the UK's Ghost Hunters, and there are numerous articles written by the magazine's "advisor and independent editorial consultant" the Rev Lionel Fanthorpe.